

Message Text

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SUBJECT: "THE SURVIVAL OF HUMANKIND: THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIMENT"

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1. TO INAUGURATE ITS NEWLY CONSTRUCTED PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER, THE GOP SPONSORED AN INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CONFERENCE ON SEPTEMBER 6 TO 10 WITH THE GRANDIOSE TITLE, "THE SURVIVAL OF HUMANKIND: THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIMENT." 138 FOREIGN SCIENTISTS PARTICIPATED IN THE CONFERENCE AT THE GOP'S EXPENSE, AND MOST WERE CONNECTED WITH UNIVERSITIES AND CAME PRINCIPALLY FROM THE UNITED STATES, CANADA AND EUROPE.

2. AFTER THE OPENING AND CLOSING PLENARIES, IN WHICH PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS GAVE ADDRESSES, THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE WAS CARRIED OUT IN 10 COMMITTEES ON SUBJECTS OF NATURAL DISASTER, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, FOOD, POPULATION, ENERGY, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE TRANSFER, NUTRITION AND HEALTH, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION, AND PLANNING MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING. THE GROUP ON FOOD DID USEFUL WORK, ACCORDING TO AN AID

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OFFICER WHO SAT IN SOME OF THE SESSIONS. SECRETARY OF

AGRICULTURE TANCO PRESENTED A PAPER WHICH WAS A USEFUL BACKGROUND STATEMENT ON PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, ANOTHER IAD OFFICER HAS REPORTED THAT THE POPULATION DISCUSSIONS CONTAINED LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE, REHASHED OLD GROUND AND PRESENTED MUNDANE RECOMMENDATIONS.

3. ON BALANCE, THE CONSENSUS APPEARS TO BE THAT THE CONFERENCE WAS A TIMELY AND EXCELLENT FORUM, DESPITE THE UNEVEN QUALITY OF WORK AMONG THE VARIOUS GROUPS. THE GIVE AND TAKE BETWEEN THE VISITING SCIENTISTS AND THEIR FILIPINO COUNTERPARTS WAS CONSTRUCTIVE AND LIVELY. THE VISITORS ALL SEEMED VERY IMPRESSED BY THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THEIR HOSTS ADDRESSED THE CONFERENCE AND THEIR PROBLEMS. STRIPPED OF THE GRANDIOSE TITLE AND THE HYPERBOLE, THE MESSAGE WHICH EMERGED WAS THAT QUOTE WE ARE AWARE OF OUR PROBLEMS AND ARE TRYING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM.

END QUOTE.

4. THE ATMOSPHERICS OF THE CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, DISTURBED MANY VISITING SCIENTISTS. THEY WERE MET AT THE AIRPORT, MEASURED FOR BARONGS WHICH WERE THEN DELIVERED THAT EVENING (FOUR PER VISITOR AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF \$40 EACH), AND FOUND A BOWL OF FRUIT AND BOTTLES OF RUM WHEN THEY CHECKED INTO THEIR ROOMS. THAT EVENING THERE WAS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR BY A MESSENGER WHO HANDED OVER AN ENVELOPE WITH 500 PESOS IN CASH FROM MRS. MARCOS. MOST OF THE SCIENTISTS HAD AN AUTOMOBILE ASSIGNED FULL TIME WITH A MILITARY AIDE. ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON PRIOR TO THE NEXT DAY'S FINAL SESSION, MRS. MARCOS COLLECTED ALL THE VISITING SCIENTISTS ABOARD THE PRESIDENTIAL YACHT FOR A CRUISE TO CORREGIDOR. WHILE SOME OF THEM WERE OFFENDED BY THIS LAVISH DISPLAY OF HOSPITALITY, MANY OTHERS WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE GESTURES AND UNDOUBTEDLY LEFT THE PHILIPPINES AS FERVENT ADMIRERS OF MRS. MARCOS AND PHILIPPINE HOSPITALITY.

5. THE CONFERENCE WAS WIDELY REGARDED AS AN OBVIOUS TRIAL-RUN OF THE NEW CONVENTION CENTER WHICH WAS RUSHED TO COMPLETION FOR THE IMF/IBRD MEETING. INDEED, MANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAVE REMARKED ON THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE OPERATIONS OF THE FACILITY DURING THE WEEK BETWEEN THE OPENING AND THE CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE. THE FACT THAT THE MEETING WAS ALSO A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROMOTION FOR PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS WAS ALSO UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED AND DISCOUNTED.

6. THERE SEEMS TO BE A CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF MOST

PARTICIPANTS WITH WHOM WE TALKED THAT THE HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE REWARDED AND THAT THERE WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE SPIN-OFFS WITH SOME FOLLOW-UP AND CONTINUING DIALOGUE. IF NOTHING ELSE, THE CONFERENCE DEMONSTRATED THE BREADTH AND EXTENT (AS WELL AS THE WEAKNESS) OF THE CONTACTS WHICH THE PHILIPPINE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY MAINTAINS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD.

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